



-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE:
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #75
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2351
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8911
CompuServe ID# 70420,1

BUREAUS

ATLANTA *Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522*
DALLAS *Thomas J. Brennan, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232*
NASHVILLE *Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300*
RICHMOND *Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151*
WASHINGTON *Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223*

September 1, 1992

92-142

- NASHVILLE -- SBC Cooperative Program receipts down in August.
- FLORIDA -- Marilyn Quayle visits Baptist feeding site.
- LOUISIANA -- Louisiana's Baptists respond to Andrew with care, essentials.
- ATLANTA -- Leazer still to direct HMB Freemasonry study.
- HONG KONG -- Trip to China helps couple resolve daughter's tragedy, photo.
- DALLAS -- Strengthening Korean, black ties goal of new Christian fellowship.
- GERMANY -- English-language churches grow in Europe despite military cuts.
- KENTUCKY -- Phoenix Project gives new hope to homeless, photo.
- NEW MEXICO -- Sunday school conference provides black experience.
- NEW MEXICO -- Churches need to understand cross-cultural differences.
- NEW MEXICO -- Cross-cultural church is model few Southern Baptists follow.

**SBC Cooperative Program
receipts down in August**

**Baptist Press
9/1/92**

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program funds received by the Executive Committee dropped nearly 8 percent compared to the same month a year ago, according to Harold C. Bennett, the committee's president-treasurer.

The August 1992 figure, \$11,210,624, is 7.85 percent below the same month in 1991, \$12,165,114.

"This decline of \$954,489 is deeply regretted," Bennett said. "That means the Foreign Mission Board received \$477,000 less from the CP in August than it would have received. Also the Home Mission Board's income was reduced by \$186,600 and our six seminaries by almost \$194,000.

"My hope remains firm. My concern is that Southern Baptists will see that world missions is as important as local church causes or state mission causes. I hope September will be better," Bennett said.

With just one month to go in the SBC fiscal year, Cooperative Program receipts for the year-to-date are 1.2 percent behind the previous year. As of Aug. 31, the 1991-92 CP totals are \$127,842,615 compared to \$129,399,470 in 1990-91.

The monthly basic operating budget is \$11,725,856 and the year's budget is \$140,712,282.

Designated gifts remain a bright spot in the SBC fiscal picture with August gifts 10.47 percent ahead of that month a year ago. August 1992 designated gifts were \$2,524,083 compared to August 1991 of \$2,284,771. For the year-to-date, designated gifts are up 3.13 percent: \$126,243,899 compared to \$122,410,610 in 1990-91.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention. Designated contributions include the Lottie Moon Offering for Foreign Missions, the Annie Armstrong Offering for Home Missions, world hunger and other special gifts.

State and regional conventions retain a percentage of Cooperative Program contributions they receive from the churches to support work in their areas and send the remaining funds to the Executive Committee for national and international ministries.

Marilyn Quayle visits
Baptist feeding site

By Jim Burton

GLENDALE, Fla. (BP)--Marilyn Quayle, wife of Vice President Dan Quayle, toured south Florida Aug. 31 and visited the Tennessee Baptist Brotherhood mobile feeding unit on 152nd Street in Glendale around 11:15 a.m., unit coordinator Curtis Fowler reported.

After volunteers served Mrs. Quayle a meal from the unit, she offered the team her assistance to get a refrigerator truck, a dumpster and food supplied regularly to the unit.

As she continued her tour of damage in south Florida, Mrs. Quayle later visited the warehouse in Florida City where Southern Baptists are receiving food and supplies.

Tennessee Brotherhood director Cameron Byler saw Mrs. Quayle there and received a "big hug around the neck." Tennessee workers had asked Mrs. Quayle to look for Byler as she continued her tour. He had left the feeding unit at 6 a.m. to take food to migrants in Florida City and had not been able to talk with fellow workers at the unit during the day.

Southern Baptist disaster relief units have provided an estimated 80,000 meals at various locations in Miami and south Florida since Hurricane Andrew's Aug. 24 landfall, according to Red Cross estimates.

Ten feeding stations, representing Florida and eight other state Baptist conventions, remain on site. A unit from Tennessee, for example, is feeding migrant workers and volunteers in the Florida city area.

--30--

Louisiana's Baptists respond
to Andrew with care, essentials

By C. Lacy Thompson

Baptist Press
9/1/92

NEW IBERIA, La. (BP)--Hurricane Andrew did not devastate Louisiana as it did Florida; fortunately the storm skirted the Bayou State coast for a bit, then moved inland over a less populated basin area between New Iberia and Morgan City. A direct hit elsewhere could have caused even more damage and perhaps more casualties than the single death reported to date.

Louisiana was aided by the fact that thousands of people fled from the path of the storm.

Red Cross reported some 50,000 persons in their shelters throughout the state. Thousands of others took refuge in homes of friends and relatives, impromptu sites and motels across Louisiana and into Arkansas, Texas and Mississippi.

Louisiana Baptists played a key role in the evacuee effort as churches throughout the state opened their doors.

North Monroe Baptist Church pastor Steve Fowler, for example, volunteered his facilities to the Red Cross as soon as the need became apparent. The church had worked with the Red Cross in earlier disasters.

Some 300 persons found refuge at the church. Another 100 sought shelter in homes of church members.

At one point, members of Temple Baptist Church in Monroe heard that North Monroe was full. Temple pastor Wayne Duncan was out of town but church members opened their facility to evacuees. "Our members felt that is what the pastor would have done," church secretary Sherry Felkel said. "Not one person has complained. They have all said it was the best thing we could have done."

--more--

In Ruston, Baptist churches assisted in housing 1,000 persons at the local civic center. Temple Baptist Church opened its recreational facilities to evacuated children and used vans to shuttle persons to the church to use its showers. At one point, church youth presented puppet shows for children, minister of education Dale Oden said.

Shreveport churches also housed evacuees. More than 300 persons sought shelter at Calvary Baptist Church on Tuesday night, Aug. 25. Half remained on Wednesday night.

"About 75 people came to prayer meeting and it was just a good time," minister of education Dave Ketchands said. "The ones who stayed on Wednesday were from the hardest-hit areas. Most of them were Cajuns from south Louisiana, so it was interesting to have them in prayer with us in North Louisiana."

In addition to churches, Louisiana College in Pineville and Tall Timbers Baptist Conference Center in Woodworth housed evacuees. Many told of traveling north in a miles-long line of cars. One told of a 12-hour trip to central Louisiana and of moving two miles in three hours at one point on the interstate highway at that.

Meanwhile, a Vietnamese woman from Amelia told of taking carloads of children to north Louisiana in an effort to flee the storm. The crew spent the night in their vehicles in a service station parking lot, then eventually backtracked to Louisiana College. She had talked to her husband on the morning Andrew hit Amelia. "He was scared. He scared us. But he had nowhere to go." She said she talked to him awhile later and he said things were better.

With the 20 or so children accompanying the group fed in the Louisiana College cafeteria, things were looking better on this end as well, she acknowledged.

As it was, Andrew caused millions of dollars in damage to homes, businesses and various crops. It also devastated the coastal wildlife and marshes.

But the real tragedy of the storm was played out in personal terms. Beyond dozens of injuries from the hurricane, scores of families returned to South Louisiana to discover they were homeless.

"I'm very pleased with the response of our people in this effort," Louisiana Baptist Convention executive assistant Truman Kerr said. "I'm not surprised at it, though. That's just the nature of our people. They've been through disasters like this and their compassion just came out to those in need."

The compassion did not stop at aiding evacuees; Louisiana Baptists have followed residents home to aid in relief and cleanup efforts.

The convention's Disaster Relief Van set up camp in Franklin where it was serving hot meals to residents. Disaster relief vans from other states were scattered across the lower portion of the state as well.

Meanwhile, Baptists throughout the state were gathering goods and volunteers to assist in recovery efforts.

Among early assessments: Several churches in the lower Louisiana associations reported wind and water damage. First Baptist Church of Morgan City suffered extensive damage to one end of its education building. Bayou Vista Baptist Church lost part of its building. Amelia Baptist Church reportedly sustained extensive damage. First Baptist Church of Grand Isle lost its roof. Various other churches sustained some roof damage.

Reports from other areas were slow to come in, however, as residents found roads impassable and telephones out of order.

Despite the impact of the storm, however, response from Louisiana Baptists was not slow as leaders set up avenues for relief funds and goods to flow.

Disaster relief funds are being received at Louisiana Baptist Convention offices -- P.O. Box 311, Alexandria, LA 71309. Non-perishable goods (no clothing) also are being accepted at the Baptist Building loading dock in Alexandria. Persons also are being asked to donate anything related to infant care -- diapers, powder, wipes, even toys.

Some churches already are preparing volunteer teams to go south and aid fellow churches. LBC special missions associate Wayne Taylor is working to compile an assessment of needs and will serve as volunteer coordinator. He may be called at 1-800-622-6549 or (318) 448-3402.

Meanwhile, the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board is offering free on-site consultation for damaged churches. Broadman also has offered to work with churches at cost to replace needed items.

--30--

Leazer still to direct
HMB Freemasonry study

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
9/1/92

ATLANTA (BP)--Gary Leazer will continue to lead the Home Mission Board's study of Freemasonry despite a call for his replacement, said HMB President Larry Lewis.

Lewis said messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Indianapolis were clear: "We have no choice as to who will do the study. The convention directed the interfaith witness department to do the study.

"As director of the interfaith witness department, he (Leazer) is responsible for leading that study and assuming that it is done in a fair and thorough manner," said Lewis.

Leazer, director of the department since 1987, was criticized recently by Larry Holly, the Beaumont, Texas, physician who originally called for a study to compare Freemasonry with Christianity.

Holly, in a nine-page letter to Lewis, called for Leazer to be removed as director of the study, claiming Leazer is too prejudiced towards those opposed to Freemasonry to produce a report critical of Freemasonry.

"I am alarmed at the potential for a compromising report being produced by the Home Mission Board," the letter states.

Lewis, however, said he does not share Holly's belief that a report directed by Leazer would be compromised.

Lewis clarified the status of the report, saying that Leazer is researching the study with the aid of the interfaith witness department staff, not preparing the report alone.

"At every step of the process, the entire staff will be assisting him," he said.

Lewis said he recognizes Holly wants a thorough report.

"Dr. Holly is very concerned about the issue and has been for many years," he said. "I can assure Dr. Holly and I can assure all Southern Baptists that it will be a thorough and honest study of Freemasonry."

During the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in Indianapolis this year, Holly introduced a motion calling for an ad hoc committee to determine whether Masonic teachings, or Freemasonry, are compatible with Christian doctrine. The convention, however, voted to instruct the HMB interfaith witness department to study the matter and report its findings next year to the annual meeting in Houston, June 15-17.

--more--

Lewis added that the report will be reviewed by others before it goes to the convention, he said.

"I will also be involved in the study and the final draft will be brought to the Home Mission Board directors for their approval," Lewis said.

--30--

Trip to China helps couple
resolve daughter's tragedy By Lounette Templeton & Avah Shelby

Baptist Press
9/1/92

HONG KONG (BP)--Clayton and Scottie Gilbert made a trip to China this summer to close the curtain on a tragedy they didn't author.

The Alexander City, Ala., couple retraced their daughter Mary Anna's six-week experience as a Southern Baptist teacher in China. They began in Meixian where she taught and ended in Guangzhou where she died in a 1990 plane crash after an attempted hijacking.

The Gilberts began saving for a trip almost from the time their 23-year-old daughter left for China earlier that year. When she called to say how happy she was with her English-teaching assignment at Jia Ying University, they knew they had to visit to see firsthand what made her so happy.

As they read Mary Anna's letters, the Gilberts made mental notes of people and places they wanted to visit on the trip: Mary Anna's students and new friend Yang Ningyu; the foreign affairs officer at the university; her classroom and the college hangout she called "the verandah"; and the Meixian church she attended.

Mary Anna's violent death Oct. 2, 1990, changed all that. As they coped with their grief, Mrs. Gilbert also had to face hip surgery. Her husband helped nurse her and carried on his part-time pastorate at Pine Grove Baptist Church near Alexander City and volunteer work at a halfway house for recovering drug addicts.

But the trip to China crept back into their lives one day. Gilbert was preparing a message for the Woman's Missionary Union meeting at the Southern Baptist Convention in 1991. As he worked, he felt God wanted them to go to China -- but not as tourists.

Their health would not permit a long-term commitment but the Gilberts volunteered for a summer teaching assignment. They contacted Cooperative Services International (CSI), the Southern Baptist aid organization that arranged their daughter's assignment.

"We wanted to experience some of what Mary Anna had experienced," Gilbert said.

The same day they filled out their CSI application, a letter inviting the Gilberts to teach arrived from Jia Ying University. Later, a letter came from Mary Anna's friend on the university staff, Yang Ningyu.

"She told us if we would come, she would treat us as her parents," Mrs. Gilbert said.

The Gilberts arrived in Meixian June 26. Waiting at the airport were Erin Thomas, the Southern Baptist teacher who survived the crash that took Mary Anna's life. Also waiting were two professors who had known Mary Anna -- and their daughter's dear friend, Yang.

The young foreign affairs officer cried, "Mother! Mother!" as she embraced Mrs. Gilbert. True to her word, Yang -- and other university officials -- treated the Gilberts with all the filial respect Chinese reserve for their own parents.

"They treated us royally. In four days, we had seven banquets," Gilbert said with a laugh. "They couldn't do enough for us."

--more--

University officials made sure the couple visited all the favorite tourist haunts in the area -- and all the places Mary Anna had written about.

Gilbert's most meaningful experience came when he followed Mary Anna's path to a small store near the university. "In her letters, she told of sitting out on 'the verandah' sipping a Pepsi, looking at a pretty rice field while she meditated," he recalled. He bought a cold drink and sat for a while on the small porch overlooking the rice field.

He also climbed the stairs to a classroom similar to all classrooms. But his daughter had taught there.

The Gilberts visited the church Mary Anna attended and signed their names in a guest book that bore Mary Anna's name on an earlier page. They heard a soft moan pass through the congregation as the pastor introduced them as the parents of the happy young American who had lost her life in China.

"After our visit in Meixian, we understood why Mary Anna was so happy there," Gilbert said.

The Gilberts admit they can't always control their emotions. "Every so often, it's difficult to hold back the tears and not wonder why," he said. "I don't question God. Our children are God's from the beginning. At least we had her for 23 years."

Originally, the Gilberts thought they would teach at Mary Anna's old university. But Jia Ying's summer English-teaching program fell through, so Cooperative Services International assigned them to teach classes at the YMCA in Guangzhou.

Teaching 18-25 hours a week for five weeks and living in one small room with no air conditioner was tough but it didn't keep the Gilberts from enjoying their students.

"They make you love them," Gilbert said. "You can't help yourself."

The students obviously loved the Gilberts too.

"They couldn't understand why we couldn't come back next summer and they couldn't believe we'd paid our own way to come," Gilbert said before they left for home Aug. 17 -- exactly two years after Mary Anna had boarded a plane for China.

Gilbert told of a student slipping back into the classroom after the others had left. "She asked me to tell her a Bible story," he said. He did more; he gave her a Bible.

In Guangzhou the Gilberts also were entertained by Chinese airline officials.

"We got the VIP treatment," he said. "Because we didn't ask for financial compensation after the crash (that killed Mary Anna), I think they wanted to do something."

At a banquet given for the couple, Gilbert thanked the officials for the help they gave at the time of their daughter's death. Later, when an official asked if the airline could do anything further, Gilbert said he and his wife would like to visit the tarmac where the crash occurred.

"I didn't think I could go," Mrs. Gilbert said. "But I'm glad I went. Erin (Thomas) went with us."

"I don't know why I wanted to see it," Gilbert added, pausing to find an answer. "But I did. And afterwards, I felt -- satisfied."

--30--

(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Strengthening Korean, black ties
goal of new Christian fellowship

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (BP)--Strengthening ties between Korean and black Christian communities throughout Texas is the long-term goal of a fellowship launched in Dallas.

Seven key black Baptist pastors and an equal number of Korean Baptist pastors from the Dallas area were invited to the pilot meeting Aug. 25 to spark continuing dialogue between the two groups.

In the wake of tensions between the black and Korean communities spotlighted during the Los Angeles riots earlier this year, it is imperative Christians take the lead in promoting harmony, according to organizers of the meeting.

"Jesus Christ did his part, organically and spiritually making us brothers, but attitudinally we have to do our part and live as brothers," said Jim Culp, director of black church relations for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

An improved understanding of both cultures by all involved is the goal, according to Benjamin Kim, Korean catalytic missionary, BGCT.

Through an ongoing fellowship, Kim said he hopes black and Korean churches will occasionally hold combined services, become involved in pulpit or choir exchanges and generally come to know one another better.

The new fellowship agreed to meet again Sept. 28 in Dallas, and the Korean Baptists extended an invitation for one or two black preachers to speak at the Korean Evangelism Conference next January.

Charles Lee Williamson, director of the missions division, Texas Baptist State Missions Commission, told the pastors he hopes their fellowship could play a part in averting the kind of racial divisiveness at the roots of the Los Angeles riots.

"We're called on to light one candle rather than curse the darkness," he said. "Somebody has to light that first candle. I pray God's people can be the candle lighters. If God's people don't, who will?"

--30--

English-language churches grow
in Europe despite military cuts

By Mike Creswell

Baptist Press
9/1/92

WIESBADEN, Germany (BP)--As American soldiers head home by the thousands from post-Cold War Europe, they take with them the need for English-language churches in some areas.

Five English-language Baptist churches in Germany have closed during the past year because of the "drawdown" of U.S. military forces.

But an ambitious church-planting effort begun several years ago has resulted in the starting of seven new churches, reaching mostly English-speaking internationals.

The churches are affiliated with the European Baptist Convention (EBC) based in Wiesbaden, Germany, a fellowship of 60 English-language churches with close Southern Baptist ties. EBC staffers are Southern Baptist missionaries; most pastors are missionaries or have Southern Baptist backgrounds.

The convention is seeking experienced Southern Baptists to start English-language churches in dozens of cities in Western and Eastern Europe, said missionary John Merritt, EBC general secretary. Leaders hope to assemble a "strike team" of such workers who could move quickly to a site to start work or continue ministry when openings occur.

--more--

The churches that closed were smaller congregations whose members were mostly U.S. military personnel. But launching of the seven English-language Baptist churches in Bulgaria, Italy, Germany, Portugal and Hungary in the past year has offset the losses.

Congregations in several other areas are nearing church status. Ongoing surveys of dozens of European cities will determine top-priority locations for other new English-language churches.

The European convention's latest church-planting push caps a decade during which 18 English-language churches started across Europe. Of that number, 15 were begun in major cities to reach international English speakers. Only three targeted American military personnel.

Increasingly, EBC churches have begun reaching out to English speakers in Europe with no U.S. military connections.

Up to 350,000 American troops were in Europe during the Cold War. But since the breakup of the Soviet Union, U.S. troops there already number fewer than 220,000 -- with more cuts to come. By 1995, fewer than 100,000 American soldiers will be in Europe, military leaders say.

But English is widely spoken in Europe. Nearly half of all business deals are conducted in English, for example. English-language television, radio, music and movies boost English beyond any other language.

Eastern Europeans are particularly keen on learning English. They see the language as their key to better economic lives. Recently demonstrators in Hungary demanded that English and German be taught in the public schools. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has sent English teachers to work in public schools there. When a Baptist church in Wroclaw, Poland, opened a school to teach English two years ago, more than 2,000 people applied -- far more than the school could handle.

A spot-check of EBC churches reveals a convention changing rapidly to accommodate a rapidly changing continent:

-- In Frankfurt, Germany, about 60 percent of Bethel International Baptist Church's members relate to the U.S. military. But in 1991 the church added the "International" to its title to show it wants to reach non-military English speakers, pastor Tom Hill said. Already members include English-speaking Russians, Romanians, South Africans, Sudanese, British and others.

The church also wants to reach English-speaking Germans and Muslims from the Middle East, said Hill, formerly a missionary and staff administrator at the Foreign Mission Board. Frankfurt is fertile for such outreach; one of every four people is a foreigner.

-- Nurnburg (Germany) Baptist Church feels the pinch as military families depart, said Southern Baptist missionary pastor Wes Crenshaw. Remaining military members feel unsettled because they "don't know when, where or if they're going," he said. Result: More members are unwilling to make long-term commitments to the church. Thirty percent of the members are non-military.

-- Immanuel Baptist Church in Madrid, Spain, has lurched from a 90-percent military membership to having just a single military family -- in a single year. Attendance averages about 70 most Sunday mornings, with more than 15 nationalities represented, reported missionary pastor Michael Hester.

When Hester arrived, many feared the church was dead because of military withdrawals. "Are we going to die? I didn't come here to die with you. I came here to change it," he told the congregation. The church shifted from outreach on military bases to outreach throughout the city, including refugees from Iraq, Liberia and China. The payoff came quickly.

"Someone joins the church or accepts Christ about every Sunday," Hester reported. Finances also have improved. A year ago the church was \$3,000 in debt; now debts are paid and \$4,000 is in the bank.

-- In Budapest, Hungary, an English-language congregation already has an average weekly attendance of 50 to 60 people, said pastor Frank Zedick, a Southern Baptist volunteer. Zedick retired after serving as pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Durham, N.C., 11 years.

The Budapest group meets at International Baptist Lay Academy, a European Baptist Federation-sponsored school. Begun by Southern Baptist volunteer Lewis Krause a year ago, it is thought to be the first English-language congregation started in Eastern Europe since the region shucked communism.

Switching to an international ministry has drawbacks. Members often have less training than those from Southern Baptist backgrounds, especially in stewardship and Bible teaching. Also, EBC churches still have rotating memberships as international members complete assignments in Europe and move. A church may lose a third of its members in a year through normal attrition.

Yet the churches traditionally have had a higher ratio of baptisms to members than Southern Baptist churches in the United States. EBC churches also give to missions causes, such as the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions, at rates several times the per capita giving of Southern Baptists. Lottie Moon giving soared 21 percent in 1991, to almost \$102,000.

EBC leaders eagerly anticipate what their proposed "strike team" of experienced Southern Baptists can accomplish in starting churches in Europe.

"Church planting is a part of who we are and what we do," declared convention leader Merritt. "We're using a great portion of our financial resources and available personnel to develop new churches. We pray and believe God will keep providing both."

Potential volunteers should not assume work in Europe will be just a vacation, counseled Ray Reynolds, missionary and EBC church-planting consultant. Even in Western Europe, the pressure of trying to live amid language problems, heavy traffic, alien cultures and related aspects of overseas living can make ministry challenging.

Life in Eastern Europe can be downright demanding. "Comforts are often limited," he warned. Political situations can be unstable. One couple drove through the edge of bloody Yugoslavia to get to their post in Bulgaria.

Southern Baptists interested in the church-planting ministry should contact John Merritt or Ray Reynolds at the European Baptist Convention office: 60 Sonnenberger Strasse, W-6200 Wiesbaden, Germany (telephone 011-49-611-523016, fax 011-49-611-590883.

--30--

Phoenix Project gives
new hope to homeless

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press
9/1/92

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Like the mythological bird that rose from the ashes of ruin, the Phoenix Project at Louisville's Jefferson Street Baptist Center helps homeless men pick up the pieces of their lives.

"We are trying to help homeless men get back on their feet and maintain healthy living by providing a safe, dignified environment," said Southern Baptist Theological Seminary student Paul Whiteley, director of the Phoenix Project.

The project, funded by the Long Run Baptist Association, the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, takes its name from both the Egyptian myth and the Phoenix Hill community surrounding the center.

--more--

It differs from emergency shelters where homeless people come for an overnight stay and leave the next morning. Phoenix Project residents move into the center for 18 months.

"One of the things that makes this program unique is that the residents all have private rooms," Whiteley said. "That is not to be critical of programs not set up this way, but it diffuses a lot of potentially hostile situations if everybody has a place to go where they can be by themselves." Residents' quarters each measure about 8 by 10 feet, with a bunk and space to store personal items.

"The obstacles that keep people from living independently are different," said Whiteley, noting, however, that lack of support from family and friends is almost a universal characteristic of homeless people.

"One of the things we try to do here is be a support system, a family for each other, and that includes the people (not in the Phoenix program) who live here," he said.

Whiteley, his wife Kate Sanders and seminary students Greg Yost and Scott Waller who work with Whiteley live downstairs from Phoenix residents.

Chemical dependency is another common problem of the homeless, Whiteley said, adding that sometimes all residents are involved in alcohol and drug rehabilitation programs.

"It's just by the grace of God I ended up here," said Phoenix Project participant Kenny Boyd. "I was an alcoholic and an addict. I was living in that lost world. I was so embarrassed about myself I didn't go around my family. I stayed out on the streets."

That sense of shame, he said, prompted him a year ago to hitch a ride from Nashville on a northbound truck.

"God must have been leading me to Louisville," he said. "I was on my way to Cleveland but I got off on Interstate 65 and just started walking around."

Boyd, 26, eventually found his way to the Jefferson Street Center, where he enrolled in the Phoenix Project last fall. He is currently involved in a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program and is studying for his high school equivalency test. He wants to go to college and become a drug and alcohol abuse counselor.

"One day I want to get an apartment and bring my kids up here to visit and stay with me," he said. "That's my goal."

His two daughters, ages 5 and 6, live in Nashville with their mother.

Another Phoenix Project resident, David Hillman, 39, had been homeless three years before moving to Jefferson Street in January.

"It's a stability and an environment that I know of existing in no other place, and I have been to a lot of places," said Hillman, an Illinois native who came to Louisville after living in Florida and Georgia.

Hillman, who doesn't remember how he ended up in Louisville, began participating in a drug and alcohol treatment program in the city that recommended he look into the Phoenix Project. "Had I not been here I would have no place to go," he said. "I would be staying at missions and sleeping outside and I would tire of that. Within 30 days I would be using again."

A severe back injury 12 years ago has limited his job possibilities: "I can't get a job because they require a physical and I can't pass a physical. I can't do anything I know how to do."

Hillman is in a government-funded vocational rehabilitation program that will pay his way to a community college this fall. He would like to complete undergraduate studies and then go to law school.

Both Boyd and Hillman have become Christians since joining the Phoenix Project and have been baptized into the fellowship of Jefferson Street Baptist Chapel, where Whiteley and other Phoenix Project staffers are members.

Although Phoenix Project participants are not required to attend church, most go regularly, Whiteley said. Boyd and Hillman praise the church as a vital part of their recovery.

"This church gives me support, inspiration and courage that I can do it," Boyd said. "At times when I have problems, I can go to somebody in the church. They help to keep me going. I am not used to this. I was always the kind of person that would give up."

Hillman said he had never imagined becoming a Christian. Now, he said, his spiritual life "fills a vacuum" he hadn't known was there. "I study the Bible and the meanings behind the Bible. It's not that I just decided that I will read the Bible or I want to know this. It's just something you do. It's like breathing."

The level of spirituality apparent in recovering addicts is "something that's challenging to me," Whiteley said, adding that persons who struggle to "stay clean and sober" have a tremendous dependence on God.

Living at the center also has affected Whiteley's attitude about poverty. "It keeps me honest about what I have and it lets my middle class values rub up against the poverty that's around here," he said, pointing toward the aging public housing project across the street. "I think I need that reminder."

--30--

(BP) photo available from Southern Seminary.

Sunday school conference
provides black experience

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
9/1/92

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Black Southern Baptist churches in large numbers are discovering basic Sunday school work as a tool for reaching and teaching people, according to the leader of black church development at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Jay Wells added, the board's Small Sunday School Leadership conference is enhancing that outreach.

The conference week at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center Aug. 24-28 offered black church leaders an opportunity to learn Sunday school work in a context where they could feel free to express themselves in a separate worship experience, Wells explained.

"The goal is to meet the needs of black church participants and let them be totally who they are," Wells said.

Last year, separate worship services were provided for language and ethnic groups for the first time. This is the first year for separate platform leaders for the black church worship.

The conference week is progressing as a time to celebrate diversity, Wells noted.

"We realized a few years ago everyone was attending the Anglo service and then having their own separate culture worship service afterwards," he said.

"Folks want to worship their own way. This is an accommodation of the expressed need of the people. Now we can bring our worship experiences here. We don't have to leave them at home when we come here.

"There is value in coming together," Wells said. "We can experience each other's culture in joint worship services. But separate services allow the fullest expression of worship."

--more--

Offering both joint services and separate services affirms diversity while celebrating unity, Wells said.

The opening service of the conference week was a joint service with Leroy Gainey, professor of Christian education at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., preaching. Gainey is black. Then separate services were held Tuesday-Wednesday nights. The Thursday evening joint service featured Wayne Bristow, director of evangelism for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, who is white, and a black gospel choir.

More than 550 black Southern Baptists were among the 828 persons registered for the conference. More than 450 of those were from California.

Wells said there are approximately 1,300 predominantly black churches in the Southern Baptist Convention. While many of those have Sunday school, the number embracing the concept of a growth-oriented Sunday school is increasing dramatically.

Approximately 800 black churches purchase Southern Baptist literature, Wells said. However, many more have adopted Southern Baptist principles for Sunday school but purchase literature from other publishers with curriculum targeted specifically to blacks.

The Sunday School Board currently does not have black-distinctive literature, Wells pointed out.

As black Southern Baptist church leaders embrace the principles of Sunday school, they are introducing them to other churches including churches of other denominations, Wells said. Consequently, the impact of the black experience at the Small Sunday School Leadership Conference will reach other churches as well as other denominations.

--30--

Churches need to understand
cross-cultural differences

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
9/1/92

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Southern Baptist churches need to see the benefit of cross-cultural involvement, but very few are doing it, Sam Beene said in a conference on how to communicate cross-culturally.

Beene, a consultant in the black church development section of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, led the session during the Small Sunday School Leadership Conference at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center, Aug. 24-28.

"Because we are Christians, it is important for us to learn how to communicate across cultures," Beene said. "People of the world are buying houses next door to us. They are joining us in the workplace. We want to be neighborly and be able to reach them."

To begin to understand people of other cultural backgrounds, it is important to understand one's own cultural background. Beene said many Anglo-Americans do not acknowledge they are a cultural people. "They look at other people as cultural but not themselves," he said.

Culture, he noted, is not necessarily ethnic. Regional variations also create cultural differences.

"We need to understand that God created all the diversity we see," he said. "We need to love diversity as God's gift."

While children see the world from their own cultural perspective and have a security based on that perspective, Beene said a mature view of the world must involve seeing cultures as equal.

--more--

"When we see people from other cultures as equals, we can begin to discover areas of commonness," he said. "In the common ground, we can find peace and friendship."

Once churches and Christians acknowledge cultural differences and begin to identify common ground, they will begin to reach across those differences to reach people, Beene said.

--30--

Cross-cultural church is model
few Southern Baptists follow

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
9/1/92

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--First Baptist Church of Vacaville, Calif., may be a model for Southern Baptist integration but it is not likely one many churches will follow, according to pastor Leroy Gainey.

Gainey has been pastor of the church 60 miles north of San Francisco for two and a half years. For the past six years, he has been the only black professor at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, a southern Baptist institution in Mill Valley, Calif.

Gainey was preacher for the black church development program during the Small Sunday School Leadership Conference at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center Aug. 24-28.

He said he went to the predominantly white church as interim pastor "and we fell in love with each other." After 10 months as interim the church called Gainey as pastor.

At the time, the church was probably 99 percent white and now is about 85 percent white, Gainey said.

While Gainey is a frequent speaker throughout the Southern Baptist Convention and known for his African-American preaching style, he said his church worship service is a mix of cultural styles that involves the black, white, Asian and Hispanic mix of the congregation.

"It is not a matter of tolerating various culture groups but accepting them," Gainey said.

Education is the key to creating acceptance, he said. "People feel more relaxed with people they know about." The church has educated members about cultural differences and helped them understand common ground, he said.

"Anglos are not normally encouraged to have cross-cultural experiences," Gainey said. "Their normal involvement with other cultures is more like, 'Ya'll come on over and be with us.'"

Not many churches are willing to call a pastor across cultural lines, Gainey acknowledged. "It would be a nice dream but I don't think our model is one people are going to buy into.

"It takes a lot of work to become cross-cultural. It takes a lot to be multiracial."

Gainey said he does not believe God expects people to give up their cultural distinctives. "He does expect us to work on our relationships," he said.

While Gainey's church may not become the norm for Southern Baptist churches, he said tremendous growth has been achieved by accepting the homogeneous principle for church growth.

He said the one negative of homogeneous churches is a charge of segregation, "but my prayer is that in the end it will work out."

--30--